



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Medford District Office
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
email address: Medford_Mail@blm.gov

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792(116)

OCT 29 2010

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ashland Resource Area, is proposing the ***Cottonwood Forest Management*** project located in the Upper Jenny Creek Watershed.

Why is BLM Proposing the Cottonwood Forest Management Project?

The Cottonwood project is designed to implement the Bureau of Land Management's 1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP) in the Cottonwood project area. Specifically, this forest management proposal is designed to:

- Ensure sustainable forest production, and the renewable resources they provide, by managing forests to improve conifer forest vigor and growth;
- Provide forest products from Matrix land allocation in accordance with the direction in the Medford District's Resource Management Plan (USDI 1995, p. 72-73);
- Maintain stand structure for nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal habitat components in spotted owl habitat;
- Maintain a transportation system within the project area that serves the management of resource program areas including timber management.

Summary of BLM's Forest Management Proposal:

The BLM proposes variable density, selective forest thinning on approximately 1,134 acres of BLM managed land. Forest thinning would be accomplished using a combination of timber sale and service contracts. Forest thinning (or silvicultural) prescriptions, designed under the principles of sustained yield forestry, are tailored to forest and site conditions to meet the desired long term objectives for each forest stand type (mixed conifer, pine, Douglas-fir, or white fir forest types). Forest thinning is designed to reduce forest densities while maintaining existing northern spotted owl habitat. Two different habitat types occur in the Cottonwood project area; 1) nesting, roosting, and foraging (NRF) habitat and 2) dispersal habitat. The following briefly describes the thinning prescriptions that would be used in each habitat type:

Maintain NSO Nesting Roosting and Foraging Habitat: Forest stands that are currently providing for northern spotted owl nesting, roosting, and foraging (NRF) habitat would be thinned to maintain NRF habitat function. The complex forest structure that forms NRF habitat consists of dead down wood, snags, dense canopy, multi-storied stands, or mid-canopy habitat. However, southwest Oregon NRF habitat varies greatly and one or more of these habitat components might be lacking or even absent. Vegetative features of NRF habitat in southwest Oregon are typified by mixed-conifer habitat, recurrent fire history, and

patchy habitat components. Variable density thinning is designed to maintain existing stand complexity where it exists including large live trees, variation in tree size classes, standing snags, and downed large woody material. Thinning prescriptions would reduce stand densities to accelerate the growth of large trees and emphasize the maintenance and establishment of early species including ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and incense cedar. Canopy cover across treated stands would be maintained at about 60 percent.

Maintain NSO Dispersal Habitat: Dispersal habitat is described as forested habitat greater than 40 years old with an average tree diameter of 11 inches, a canopy closure of 40 percent or more, and flying space for owls in the understory. Forest stands that are currently only providing for northern spotted owl dispersal habitat would be thinned to retain approximately 40 percent canopy cover to maintain the current distribution of dispersal habitat. Thinning prescriptions would reduce stand densities to accelerate the growth of large trees and emphasize the maintenance and establishment of early species including ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and incense cedar. Variable density thinning is designed to maintain existing stand complexity where it exists including large live trees, variation in tree size classes, standing snags, and downed large woody material.

Approximately 28 miles of existing road would be used for hauling and would be maintained to BLM standards (maintain drainage, spot rocking, etc). Approximately 1.6 miles of new permanent road is proposed for construction to access treatment units. Approximately 0.85 miles of roads are proposed for decommissioning.

High fuel loadings created by logging slash would be mitigated. Treatment of logging slash is usually accomplished by handpiling debris and covering with plastic, and pile burning. Timber sale contracts also provide an option for purchasers to utilize biomass, which could reduce the amount of on-site fuels treatment required. Lopping and scattering of slash, swamper burning, or underburning may be used where fuel loadings are not high. Post-harvest evaluations are used to determine the level of fuels treatment needed to mitigate fuel loads.

Field Trip

There is still a little time to visit the field before it is under a blanket of snow. This is an opportunity for the public to view examples of forest stands proposed for treatment and discuss the proposed silvicultural treatments with BLM staff.

The field trip is scheduled for November 6, 2010 (weather permitting):

Where to Meet: Little Hyatt Prairie Road near the intersection of Hwy 66
What Time: Meet at 9:30 AM (Field Trip will run to about 3:30 PM)

Additional Information: Please R.S.V.P. if you plan to attend. This will allow the BLM to provide you with information updates in the event of cancellations due to poor weather or travel conditions. Also in the event of questionable weather conditions, please call 541-618-2384 for an update on field trip plans. We will be driving and walking on existing forest roads but there may be some hiking for short distances through forest land. **Please wear sturdy shoes and bring food and water to meet your personal needs.** Parking may be limited in a few areas; carpooling to limit vehicle numbers and traffic is strongly encouraged.

PLEASE R.S.V.P. IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE FIELD TRIP
Please contact Kristi Mastrofini at (541) 618-2384, or
Email: Kristi_Mastrofini@or.blm.gov

How to Comment:

The BLM will be preparing an Environmental Assessment for the Cottonwood Forest Management Project and we are seeking your input on our forest management. Comments should be as specific as possible. If you would like to provide input on potential alternatives to our proposed action that could meet the objectives described above, or provide information on potential issues or concerns that the environmental analysis should address, please submit your written comments to Kristi Mastrofini, Cottonwood Forest Management Project, Medford District BLM, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504. If you do not have comments at this time but would like to be kept informed as planning progresses on this project, please fill out the attached response form (Enclosure 3) and your name will be maintained on the mailing list. Responses should be received by December 1, 2010. Those responding to this or other public notices concerning the Cottonwood Forest Management Project will be informed as planning continues.

Before including your address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you are advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For more information, please contact Kristi Mastrofini at (541) 618-2384.

Sincerely,



John Gerritsma

4 Enclosures:

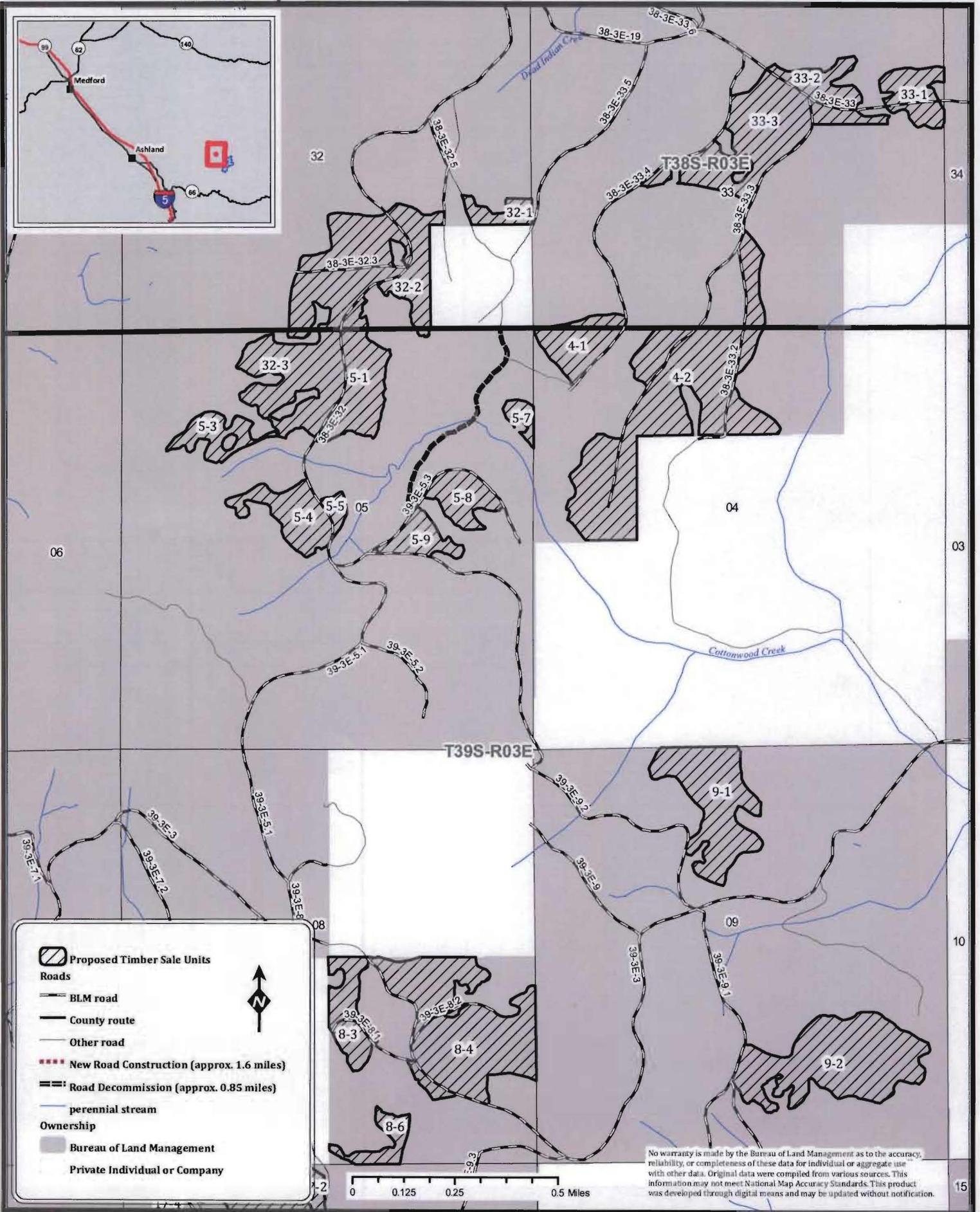
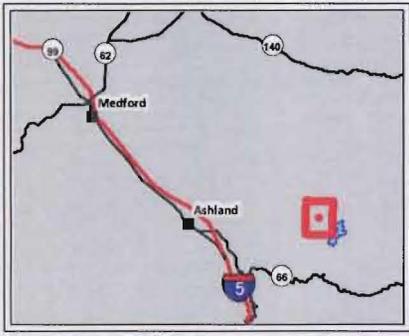
- 1-Cottonwood Project Map - North (1 p.)
- 2-Cottonwood Project Map - South (1 p.)
- 3-Interest Response Form (1 p.)
- 4-List of units with silvicultural prescriptions, harvest method, and acres (1 p.)



Proposed Cottonwood Forest Management Project (Northern Units)



Enclosure



Proposed Timber Sale Units

Roads

- BLM road
- County route
- Other road
- New Road Construction (approx. 1.6 miles)
- Road Decommission (approx. 0.85 miles)
- perennial stream

Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private Individual or Company



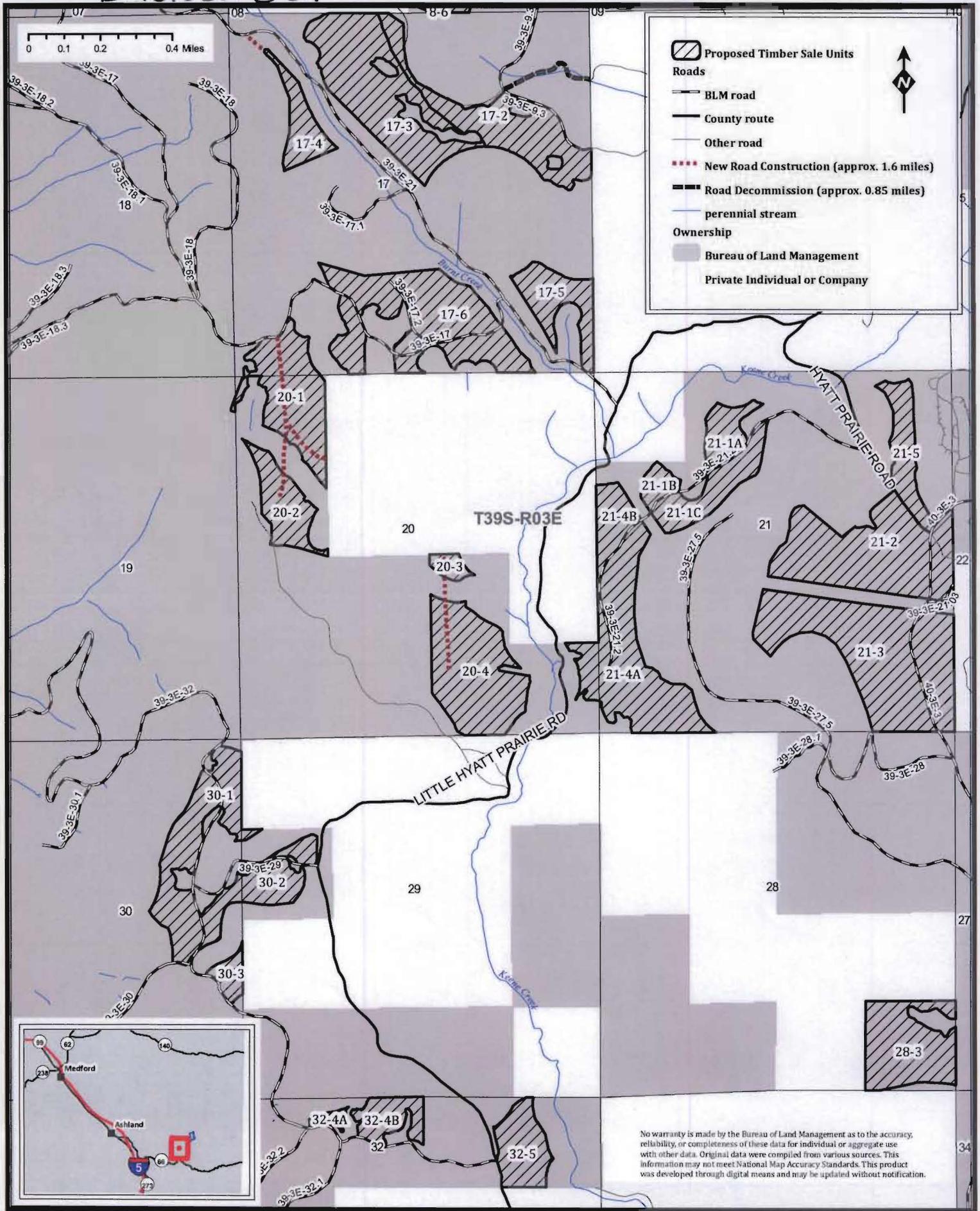
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

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Proposed Cottonwood Forest Management Project

Enclosure 2 (Southern Units)



Enclosure 3

INTEREST RESPONSE FORM

**Attn: Ashland Resource Area Planning
BLM's – Cottonwood Forest Management Project
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504**

Please include me on the Cottonwood Forest Management Project mailing list:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State Zip Code: _____

We are trying to save paper and conserve resources. Please respond if you wish to be kept informed.

Enclosure 4. Unit listing by Silvicultural Prescription

Unit No.	Acres	Silvicultural Prescription		Harvest Method	Fuels Treatments
		Forest Type	NSO Habitat Type		
4-1	13.2	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
4-2	74.7	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-1	19.3	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-3	8.7	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-4	14.2	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-5	2.4	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-8	10.3	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
5-9	7.8	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
8-3	12.8	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
8-4	53.0	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
8-6	6.2	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
9-1	29.9	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
9-2	44.6	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
17-2	37.9	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
17-3	56.6	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Cable	Activity fuel
17-4	12.9	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
17-5	19.3	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
17-6	64.8	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
20-1	36.4	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
20-2	18.1	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
20-3	3.8	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
20-4	47.7	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-1A	11.1	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-1B	5.4	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-1C	18.8	White Fir Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-2	63.5	Mixed Conifer/Armillaria	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-3	81.9	Mixed Conifer/Armillaria	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-4A	57.0	Mixed Conifer/Armillaria	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-4B	12.0	Mixed Conifer/Armillaria	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
21-5	16.5	Mixed Conifer/Sanitation	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
28-3	34.6	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
30-1	39.6	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
30-2	21.5	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
30-3	5.5	Mixed Conifer Site	NRF	Tractor	Activity fuel
32-1	5.0	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
32-2	13.7	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
32-3	59.8	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel

Unit No.	Acres	Silvicultural Prescription		Harvest Method	Fuels Treatments
		Forest Type	NSO Habitat Type		
32-4A	2.4	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
32-4B	12.6	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
32-5	18.4	Mixed Conifer Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
33-1	10.8	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
33-2	12.9	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
33-3	33.7	White Fir Site	Dispersal	Tractor	Activity fuel
Total	1,134				
Abbreviations: NSO = Northern Spotted Owl NRF = Nesting, Roosting, Foraging					